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New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
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	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Mr. Muhannad Hadi, Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, World Food Programme.

Mr. O'Brien is joining us via audio-teleconference from Bahrain.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed: I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to update the Council on the latest developments in Yemen and challenges facing efforts to ensure the country's return to peace and stability.

Recent developments in Yemen run counter to the commitments to peace made by the parties to the United Nations and the international community. The security situation is dire, and the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate despite the efforts of the humanitarian agencies.

With regard to security, on 8 October the Grand Hall in Sana'a was subject to a tragic and painful attack, where nearly 1,000 Yemenis were gathered to pay their condolences at a funeral, killing more than 140 and injuring 550. I visited the site of the attack several days ago, together with family members of the victims, and saw for myself the shocking scale of destruction. The Mayor of Sana'a, Abdel Kader Hilal — a seasoned politician known for his bravery and commitment to peace until his very last day, and two members of the De-escalation and Coordination Committee (DCC) — were among the victims of the attack.

The bombing of a funeral is contrary to all Yemeni norms and traditions, as well as to international humanitarian law, and the perpetrators must be held accountable. I extend once again my deepest condolences to the families of the victims and wish a speedy recovery to those who were wounded in this attack. I commend the statements issued by the families of the victims, calling for restraint and a thorough investigation of the incident. This is a clear demonstration of their sense of nationalism and commitment to peace.

The Arab coalition has taken responsibility for the attack and its joint incidents assessment team conducted a rapid preliminary investigation, which recommended action against those involved and a revision of the coalition's rules of engagement. It will be very important to complete the investigations and to ensure the accountability of those involved.

Sadly, the 8 October attack was not the only incident in which civilians and civilian infrastructure were targeted in the past weeks. On 3 October, the shelling of the Bir Basha district of Taiz from areas controlled by forces of the Houthi and General People's Congress (GPC), resulted in nine civilian deaths, including three children. Taiz has been subject to the indiscriminate and lethal shelling of its residential areas that has caused great damage to the city and its population and must stop. These incidents are a horrific reminder of the consequences of a war that has blighted the country during the past 18 months of conflict.

The conduct of the parties on the ground is contrary to their prior commitments to engage fully and constructively in the United Nations-mediated peace process. I called on the parties to recommit to the 10 April terms and conditions for the cessation of hostilities. Although I would have preferred an open-ended cessation of hostilities, I was able to gain agreement on a 72-hour pause, which entered into force on 19 October.

I regret to report that both sides were involved in significant violations of the cessation of hostilities from its very first day. I am deeply concerned by the escalation of hostilities, which has continued at an alarming rate in the past few weeks. Fighting has escalated in Taiz, Mareb, Al-Jawf and Hajjah and along the border with Saudi Arabia, where ballistic missile attacks have increased in frequency and range. The

targeting of the area of Mecca al-Mukarramah and Jeddah was a dangerous development that may affect the course of the war and the feelings of more than 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide.

I am also concerned that, according to reports, international vessels travelling off the coast of Yemen have come under fire from Houthi-controlled territories in recent weeks. A United Arab Emirates vessel was targeted in the Strait of Bab El-Mandab. United States destroyers travelling through international waters were reportedly targeted by direct missile attacks and reportedly responsibilityonded by firing on Houthi radar sites. These incidents risk causing a more acute escalation of the conflict and threaten the security of international maritime movement. I thank the Council for its call on 4 October for such attacks to cease immediately.

In southern Yemen, Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the so-called Islamic State continue to attack State institutions and civilian targets. In Aden on 1 October, a suicide bomber killed one civilian and injured three others, and on 29 and 30 September gunmen affiliated with the Islamic State assassinated a retired intelligence officer and a security officer. As part of their counter-terrorism efforts, Yemeni security forces raided the house of a prominent Islamic State leader and confiscated a variety of weapons and explosives. In Abyan, counter-terrorism forces killed three militants, including a high-ranking AQAP affiliate, and arrested two others.

The escalating military situation continues to exacerbate a very dire humanitarian situation, which requires far greater attention from the international community. Local authorities in Yemen are unable to provide basic social services for the population. This is particularly true in the health sector, where only 45 per cent of facilities are functional. In addition to the growing difficulty Yemenis are experiencing in obtaining medical treatment at home, many Yemenis are also unable to seek treatment abroad due to the prohibition of commercial flights from Sana'a. In that context, I call for the immediate resumption of commercial flights to and from Sana'a. I also call on the Houthis and GPC to ensure that access for humanitarian agencies is free from bureaucratic impediments and intimidation so that all who need assistance can receive it. My colleagues Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Mohannad Hadi, Regional Director of the World Food Programme for the Middle East and North African region, will provide the Council with a more detailed briefing of the humanitarian situation and the United Nations efforts to provide assistance.

I should add that the deteriorating economic situation threatens to create a far greater humanitarian crisis in the coming months if urgent action is not taken to save the day. Salary payments for most civil servants — a primary source of income for much of the population — have already ceased. Unless they are resumed quickly, many more Yemenis will face destitution and be forced to rely on humanitarian aid to survive. All parties, including the Government of Yemen, the Houthis and GPC, must commit to cooperating to ensure the continued functioning of the Central Bank and a rapid resumption of salaries throughout the country.

Despite the international community's calls for the Yemeni parties to fully commit to the peace process, the parties have continued to take unilateral actions that risk undermining the prospects for peace. On 2 October, the High Political Council established by the Houthis and GPC asked the former Governor of Aden to form a new Government. President Hadi Mansour's decision to replace the Governor of the Central Bank and relocate the Bank to Aden has created further economic uncertainty at a time when urgent measures to save the economy are necessary. Prime Minister Ahmed Bin-Dagher announced via social media plans to convene a national body to ratify the draft constitution. I again urge the parties to refrain from taking any further measures, which will only complicate reaching a negotiated settlement to put Yemen on the path to peace.

I have conducted extensive consultations with the Yemeni parties and members of the international community over the past few weeks, and presented the parties with a comprehensive and detailed road map to end the conflict. The road map is consistent with resolution 2216 (2015) and other relevant resolutions, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, and the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference. The road map contains a set of sequenced political and security steps, conducted in parallel, that would help Yemen return to peace and orderly political transition.

The road map foresees the creation of military and security committees that would supervise withdrawals

and the hand-over of weapons in Sana'a, Al-Hudaydah and Taiz. The committees would also be tasked with ensuring the complete end of military violence and the safety and security of the population and State institutions. The road-map also lays out interim political arrangements, including the appointment of a new Vice-President and the formation of a Government of national unity that would lead Yemen's transition process and oversee the resumption of political dialogue, the completion of the constitutional process and, ultimately, elections. I have been informed unofficially that the parties have rejected the road map. This demonstrates that the political elite in Yemen remain unable to overcome their differences and prioritize national, public interest over personal interests. It is time for the parties to realize that there can be no peace without concessions and no security without agreement. They should base their positions on the question of how to ensure security and stability for the Yemeni people.

I will return to the region immediately following this briefing to start consultations with the parties in Sana'a and Riyadh with the aim of reaching a detailed agreement based on the road map. It is now the responsibility of the delegations to prioritize peace and stability. The road map and the agreements discussed in Kuwait should allow the peace process to move towards a comprehensive settlement in the coming weeks if the parties engage in good faith and demonstrate a sense of political and national awareness.

I am grateful for the international community's continued support to my proposal for a comprehensive agreement and calls for a cessation of hostilities. The quadrilateral meetings of the Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in Jeddah, New York and London have supported these efforts, along with their counterparts from the remaining members of the Gulf Cooperation Council. I also thank the Foreign Ministers of the Sultanate of Oman, France, Egypt, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain and the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, for their support. I am also grateful to the Council members for their unwavering support for the efforts to restore peace in Yemen.

After 18 months of horrific fighting, thousands of deaths, injuries, unspeakable human suffering and total economic collapse, we all need to ask how long Yemenis will remain hostages to personal and reckless political decisions. What are the parties waiting for to sign a political agreement? Have they not understood that there are no winners in wars? The road map I have proposed to the parties is widely supported by the international community because it provides a comprehensive solution and includes guarantees for the political representation of all political groupings.

I would like to ask the Council for its full support of the peace plan, an immediate cessation of hostilities and the release of all prisoners and detainees. And to the Yemenis I say that the dawn of peace could be near if those responsible decide to prioritize the national interest and start working on rebuilding a stable State that guarantees the rights of all of its people without discrimination.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien: There can be no humanitarian solution to the conflict in Yemen. There needs to be a political solution, beginning with an immediate cessation of hostilities. I echo the Special Envoy's call. All parties and all with influence over them must work towards peace. Each day that this war continues, it is civilians who suffer. Each day that the conflict drags on, we are inexorably propelled ever closer to an entire generation of Yemenis whose formative years will have been spent in the chaos of combat.

This humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen is a man-made disaster, where conflict has exacerbated and exponentially increased the suffering of the 50 per cent of Yemeni population who were already in dire and extreme poverty. Repeatedly over the past 19 months, the people of Yemen have been robbed of their lives, their hope and their right to live in dignity. Thousands have been killed, tens of thousands have been injured, more than 3 million have been forced to leave their homes, and 7 million suffer the daily anxiety of not knowing where their next meal might come from.

I have recently returned from Sana'a and Al-Hudaydah, and in my previous visit I reached Aden as well. I saw the desperation, fear and resignation in the deep-sunken eyes of people I met who have lost all hope — moved either to anger or powerless despair. In short, since my last briefing to the Council, the humanitarian situation has become worse and 80 per cent of Yemenis — some 21.2 million people — are in need of some form of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian

actors are being asked to fill the void left by the political power vacuum, but this is not a viable solution.

All the parties are reminded that adherence to international humanitarian law is an obligation, not an option. Perpetrators on all sides must be held responsible for the legions of violations of international humanitarian law. The Council and its members also have responsibilities in this regard. I also stress the need for effective, independent investigations into allegations of war crimes and to prosecute suspects.

Since the collapse of the cessation of hostilities in August, Yemenis across the country, in areas controlled by various warring factions or none, have endured near-daily attacks on civilians, civilian institutions and public infrastructure. In August, the Saudi-led coalition bombed a health facility supported by Médecins Sans Frontières and a school in Sa'ada, and the attack on the Grand Hall funeral gathering in Sana'a earlier this month — for which the Saudi-led coalition has taken responsibility — left at least 140 people dead and 550 injured. And although there is no equivalence between those killing with air power, available only to one side of the fight, and those on the other side killing with land-based weaponry, the Houthi/Saleh forces have indiscriminately shelled Taiz and other locations, as well as towns and installations inside Saudi Arabia, reportedly using ballistic missiles.

Humanitarian workers are also prevented from doing their work. Armed Houthi and Saleh forces routinely intimidate, delay and harass humanitarians, threatening the Yemenis' last lifeline with arrests and deportation, or demanding the diversion of humanitarian assistance to their fighters. These are all unacceptable breaches of humanitarian law and humanitarian principles.

The drawn-out nature of Yemen's conflict is having a devastating effect on public institutions, which are increasingly unable to provide basic social services. A quarter of the population depends on those employed on the public payroll. Yet paychecks are coming with less regularity and the ability to withdraw cash is disappearing amidst a liquidity crisis. This is a foreshadowing of the impeding collapse of Yemen's economy, which is already desperately poor and hollowed out by corruption. The Central Bank has been unilaterally moved to Aden. Humanitarians do not have the capacity or the resources to provide services to a population of 26 million Yemenis. Our joint appeal is less than half funded.

The complete, permanent collapse of public institutions must be prevented. While the primary duty lies with the Government of Yemen, the de facto Houthi authorities and the previous Saleh regime, I call upon anyone with any influence to heed this call, including by ensuring that the salaries of doctors and nurses and other critical civil servants are paid.

Where the failure of public services is felt perhaps most acutely is the health sector. Fewer than half of the rudimentary health facilities remain functional. Earlier this month, as I said, I visited Al-Hudaydah, held by Houthi/Saleh forces. Al-Hudaydah governorate is the poorest in Yemen. I met with children and mothers, a few fathers and the desperately overworked doctors, nurses and carers at the paediatric centre at Al-Thawra hospital, where the machines and lights frequently cut out due to shortages of generator fuel, and the medicine cabinets were empty. Easily treatable chronic illnesses are becoming death sentences. Yemenis, old and young, are dying every day because of the deprivation of basic goods and services. Since March 2015,10,000 children under the age of five have perished from preventable diseases as a result of the sharp decline in the availability of immunizations and remedies for diarrhoea and pneumonia. Also at risk are migrants from the Horn of Africa and the more than 3 million internally displaced, nearly half of whom are children. They are particularly dependent on assistance, and on supplies getting in by port or air — neither which is getting in at the moment — and are vulnerable to the spread of disease.

Yemen is one step away from famine. I met an 18-year-old woman with her 3-year-old baby, who was bedridden with severe malnutrition, making it difficult to eat; she is barely surviving on milk and tea. I met 8-year-old children who looked like 2-year old toddlers due to severe malnutrition and the resulting health complications. We can only imagine how many more children and teenagers are suffering and dying of hunger and never make it to a hospital. As I learned while in Yemen, over 14 million people food insecure; 7 million are severely food insecure and do not know where their next meal is coming from, as I said earlier. Over 2 million are malnourished nationwide, including 370,000 children who are severely malnourished.

On top of this already unthinkable suffering, cholera is rearing its ugly head. There are now 61 confirmed cases of cholera, with more than 1,700 more suspected cases in 10 governorates. To date, the Ministry of

Health has confirmed 4 cholera-related deaths and 42 deaths associated with acute watery diarrhoea. But the caseload is almost certainly much higher owing to a lack of testing kits. The United Nations and its partners are establishing 21 cholera treatment centres, but that is insufficient to stop the escalating spread.

As before the conflict, the vast majority of the needs of the Yemeni people are met through commercial deliveries. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) is a unique first initiative in such arrangements pulled together by Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and now run by the United Nations Office for Project Services. I take this opportunity to call for the renewal of its mandate. Let us back something that is working. UNVIM has cleared over 190 commercial vessels to successfully offload over 3 million metric tons of food, fuel and supplies at ports in Al-Hudaydah port, Ras Isa and Al-Saleef since May.

However, there are currently approximately 40 vessels waiting to offload approximately 1.4 million metric tons of cargo, including approximately 600,000 metric tons of food. Offloading cargo can take up to 30 days on average, because of inefficient port management, financial disputes between shippers and, above all, slow offloading owing to limited capacity at Al-Hudaydah port, which was severely damaged by air strikes — albeit denied — in August 2015. Those cranes need to be removed quickly to make way for emergency mobile cranes.

Profiteering from commercial imports in a country where 90 per cent of food must be imported is unacceptable in the face of a humanitarian disaster. Since February 2016, fuel imports have averaged a fifth of the pre-air-strikes levels. The coalition and the local port authorities need to ensure rapid and safe access for cleared vessels to reach the ports, especially Al-Hudaydah port. I also call on donors to support the rehabilitation of the damaged port infrastructure in Al-Hudaydah, which is the lifeline of the country. The United Nations is trying to accelerate the procurement of mobile cranes to dramatically increase the port's capacity, but that is a short-term solution at best.

In the same vein, I echo the calls for the coalition and the Government of Yemen to immediately resume commercial flights to and from Sana'a. Saudi Arabia controls the airspace over Yemen, generally, and Sana'a, in particular. It is within its power and is its choice to permit that. Since Yemenia stopped flying into Sana'a, thousands of Yemenis have found themselves stranded, including students who need to pursue their studies abroad and patients who need medical care not available in Yemen today. Many lives could be saved if only people could travel freely to obtain that medical treatment. For instance, the United Nations worked tirelessly to organize life-saving evacuations via air of wounded civilians form the 8 October attack on the Great Hall. The Iranians and, quickly thereafter, the Kingdom of Saudia Arabia also offered to assist with evacuations. Yet politics, bureaucratic impediments and other obstacles prevented us from doing so. Clearly, the people of Yemen cannot be asked to depend upon such improvisations in order to receive essential medical care. I take this opportunity to commend Oman which was able to evacuate more than 100 people for medical treatment, but a second evacuation could not be arranged in time before the ceasefire ended.

Since I last briefed the Council, humanitarian partners were reaching 3.5 million every month between January and July. Now they are reaching 4.6 million per month, despite all challenges. There has been a steady increase in deliveries to people in need across the country, and an additional million people are now being reached with food aid every month, with more than 4 million Yemenis receiving food aid each day. Partners have provided essential health services through fixed and mobile teams, including both trauma and secondary health care, and provided medicines and supplies to health facilities that serve millions.

The United Nations, under the strong leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator, together with our humanitarian partners, stands ready to do more, if only the humanitarian access constraints could be eased and we had more financial support. But that requires coordination with the coalition, the myriad of local actors at the central level in Sana'a and other parties to the conflict. Bureaucratic impediments in Yemen were already a problem before the current conflict began and have since then grown more complex. The United Nations continues to negotiate access with all relevant actors, including the authorities in Sana'a.

This man-made brutal humanitarian disaster is now the catastrophe, which I had said was "looming" in my first briefing (see S/PV.7494) to the Council 18 months ago. The conflict has gone on for too long. It is high time that the parties put the Yemeni people first and reach a peaceful agreement in order to salvage what is

left of the infrastructure, the economy and the social services of the country and, most importantly, address the aspirations of the Yemeni people to live in a peaceful society. If disregarded, the collapse of the country will have menacing consequences not only for the Yemeni people, but the entire region. The parties, their proxies and those with influence over them — namely, the Yemeni Government, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the regional Gulf nations in the Gulf Cooperation Council, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and other Western partners of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — all have key roles and influence, as do the Houthi authorities, former President Saleh and his supporters and Iran. They can arrest this war and this suffering. They can get behind the framework agreement put forward by the Special Envoy and secure peace in 30 days. It is a political decision which takes courage and leadership, and we cannot wait.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. O'Brien for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Hadi.

Mr. Hadi: Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the Arab world and has been devastated by a war that has set the country back for decades. The state of Yemen is broken. That is what the Yemenis themselves told me last week. They feel as though they are dying in silence and that they have been forgotten by the world. Yemen has been plagued by years of instability and widespread poverty. Before the conflict, Yemen was already suffering. Many people were already suffering from food insecurity. Simply put, the war has aggravated that situation. Basic social services were on the verge of collapse. Today, more than 20 million people are in true need of some form of assistance. How we have reached this stage is an important question, but what is more important today is that I share with you an eyewitness account of the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

I have just returned from Yemen after a 7-day mission. That was actually my second trip to Yemen in two months and my third since the crisis started. On my latest trip, I visited Sana'a, Hajjah and A-Hudaydah. I am not a stranger to Yemen. I worked and lived there for the World Food Programme (WFP) for three years in the 1990s. But this time, as I was approaching Sana'a's airport, looking out from the WFP-operated flight — which is one of the few special flights that still service Sana'a — I saw the damage that the airport had incurred.

Several things came to mind. I wondered how people live. How do people come back to Yemen if they are stranded outside the country. If someone required medical evacuation, I wondered, how would that situation be handled? As a staff member for the World Food Programme, I also thought about what would happen if we were asked to carry out an airlift for urgently needed food and medicines to Sana'a. Would the airport be able to handle such an operation? I really do not know. I began to ask my colleagues if the airport could handle such an operation.

On our way to the WFP offices from the airport, I really looked into the faces of the Yemeni people on the streets, among whom, as I mentioned, I had lived for three years. What I saw were the signs of a lot of wear and tear on their faces. They truly looked sad as they watched another United Nations convoy pass through the streets of Sana'a, not knowing if it was a sign of hope or an end to the devastating war. When I arrived at the office, again, I looked into the faces of the staff and met with them. When I met with the national staff, I especially sensed that they were actually torn between fulfilling their humanitarian duties and taking care of their own crises at home. Many among the United Nations staff are actually displaced within Sana'a.

For the first few days of my mission in Sana'a, I met with local authorities civil servants. The one message that came up consistently in every single meeting was that needs are increasing. There is a growing number of people who are in desperate need of assistance and the humanitarian operations are not keeping up. The food security situation in Yemen is deteriorating rapidly. Hunger is becoming epidemic everywhere. This June, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification revealed that over 14 million people in Yemen are food insecure. Of those, 7 million are severely food insecure. It is one thing to read those reports, but it is another to go and speak with a mother and father who cannot serve a meal to their children at the end of the day. As Mr. O'Brien said, those people do not know when their next meal is coming. It is really scary to not know if you can offer your children a meal. In some governorates, 70 per cent of the population is struggling to feed themselves. Nine out of Yemen's twenty-two governorates are classified as level three. In other words, those governorates are at emergency

levels of food insecurity. In simple terms, that means they are one step away from hunger.

Once I left Sana'a, I went to Hajjah to see and speak to people in the field. Our first stop was at the health centre. It was crowded, with people queued up almost until the entrance of the hospital. Some of the beds had two kids in them. Almost all of the children that I saw were malnourished, and some were severely malnourished. The mothers of those children told me that they had had to travel long distances from remote areas in order to make it to the clinic. They told me that they had to borrow money from neighbours and relatives, and even to sell their assets, in order to pay for treatment.

I am sorry to say that that is the positive side of things. I can only imagine what I would have seen if I had had the opportunity to visit more remote locations. I would have seen parents looking at their dying children who could not afford the long journey to the hospitals — hospitals that may or may not have had the capacity to respond to them. According to UNICEF , 1.5 million children in Yemen suffer from acute malnutrition, including 370,000 with severe acute malnutrition, a life-threatening condition that requires urgent treatment. The figure of 370,000 represents an astonishing increase of 65 per cent from 2014. Children suffering from severe malnutrition are 10 times more at risk of dying than their peers because their immune systems are extremely weak.

Our next stop was at the WFP General Food Distribution office in Hajjah. The streets were crowded with thousands of people lined up at the entrance. Since February, WFP has had to split rations to ensure that we reach as many food insecure people as possible. We had already planned to reach 3 million people, but with the rapid increase in the number of hungry people, we were trying to give everybody something. Our teams and partners have been forced to reach 6 million people every month with half a ration. That is not the best way to fight malnutrition, but it is the way to keep as many people alive as possible in this situation. Many families were generous enough to share their struggles with me and the team. They told us how they experience hunger every day and, sadder still, how they see it in the faces of their children. For the first time, I found myself helpless and unable to offer even words of support, let alone promises of increased help and assistance that we might offer.

Everyone I met spoke about the increasing food prices. Food prices are more than 20 per cent higher than they were before the war. Yemen's middle class is now joining the ranks of those who cannot put food on the table for their children. That is really worrying. Many civil servants have not been paid for few months now. They are no longer even able to purchase food.

On the road from Hajjah to Al-Hudaydah, we stopped along the mountains to speak to one of the farmers. He was harvesting millet and recounted to us the details of how his crops had been damaged because of the conflict. When I asked him how he was planning to survive and what he was going to do given that he had already lost his harvest, he kept repeating the words that I heard from almost every struggling Yemeni that I met, which translate to "we are in the hands of God".

The road from Hajjah to Al-Hudaydah was the same road that I remember from 20 years ago. I have driven that road many times, except that this time it was destroyed. Some bridges were destroyed; it was a bumpy road and we had to take too many detours. It was difficult. I then wondered how the road was going to be used when the rainy season started. How is food going to be moved from Al-Hudaydah to the rest of the governorates?

Then we visited the port of Al-Hudaydah. As everybody has said, I looked at the cranes and the port equipment and so many things were damaged. Yemen imports 90 per cent of its food requirements. The port of Al-Hudaydahis a lifeline to many Yemeni people. I was even told that the labourers are no longer feeling safe enough to work in the port, so there is a lot of congestion, a lack of equipment and labourers who are not working. Even a WFP vessel that was carrying urgently needed food had been waiting for weeks to dock so that the food could be delivered to the people who needed it.

Our next stop was Al-Thawra hospital in Al-Hudaydah, which was a visit that proved to be the defining moment of my mission. I saw the faces of children that have been engraved in my mind as iconic images of the crisis in Yemen. I saw children and images — this time real ones — that I have never seen in my 25 years of working for the World Food Programme. I will never forget the children that I saw.

I am sure many of those present have seen the disturbing images on the news recently, including the heartbreaking photograph of 18-year-old, Ms. Saida

Ahmed Baghili. She was in the hospital when we visited. The doctors told me that they had been seeing an increase in children with severe acute malnutrition. Malnutrition compromises the immune system of those children who, like Saida, suffer from other health complications. That all leading to high rates of child mortality. The global acute malnutrition rate among children in Al-Hudaydag, like Saida is one of the highest around the world. The images of those children and their mothers shocked me and my colleagues. We all stood helpless. Overcome by emotion, I could not decide who to sympathize with more — a malnourished child sitting on a bed, too tired and sick to even cry, or his mother next to him, too hungry and tired to support her child. That really hurt me, not only as a humanitarian worker but as a father.

Hunger and malnutrition are solvable problems but only through the right intervention at the right time. That is why we need to focus on helping the Yemeni people. That is why we have to make sure that we have the right access. I would like to thank the donors that have supported and continue to support WFP in implementating such programmes. We have been able to work and assist, but only where we have access.

There are also challenges in getting timely security clearances for the delivery of assistance. The fluid security situation and ongoing fighting definitely do not help WFP and the rest of the humanitarians to work better to dispatch aid, to monitor and to make sure that the right intervention is carried out at the right time. That is something that we worry about, and it is one of our main concerns. On the long drive back to Sana'a, I had time to reflect on what I had seen. The situation is undoubtedly beyond critical. Resources and political support are urgently needed from the international community. In 2016, WFP in Yemen has been funded only 34 per cent of the $6 million needed.

I am not a politician and WFP is proud of its neutral and impartial stance. I am here not to discuss political matters, but rather to illustrate the impact of the current conflict on the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people. An entire generation is crippled by hunger today in Yemen, and we rely on the international community to support us in this challenging time.

I met many people in Yemen, and I promised them that I would convey their suffering to the world.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Hadi for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this will be the last time that my delegation takes the floor during the Russian presidency of the Security Council, let me thank you, Sir, and your entire team for guiding our work in a month that has been particularly challenging. Allow me in particular to highlight your careful and balanced work in the Security Council with regard to the process of selecting the next Secretary-General of the Organization.

I would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed; Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien; and Regional Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. Muhannad Hadi, for their briefings.

Uruguay is deeply troubled by the worsening of the conflict in Yemen in the light of the most heinous violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and human rights law taking place daily. The scarce media coverage of the grave conflict in Yemen does not absolve the perpetrators, the international community or the Security Council of the responsibility they shoulder. We are concerned about the ongoing violence and the dismantling of institutions in the country as a result of the increase in terrorist activity. Uruguay regrets the repeated failures of the peace process, including the most recent attempt to establish a 72-hour ceasefire. In that regard, I support the resumption of the negotiation process, which for many months has failed to achieve tangible results, and which is now dependent on the impact of a weakened road map.

Uruguay reiterates its appeal to the parties to resume dialogue and to fully comply with their commitment to ceasing hostilities to allow for the conditions conducive to establishing peace. Actors in the region must demonstrate their commitment to peace and, in particular, those countries that have influence with the parties must take vigorous steps to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. In that regard, I would like to highlight the work conducted by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and to express my delegation's support for his continued efforts to find a solution to end the conflict. We would also like to deeply thank all those involved in lending humanitarian assistance in Yemen, for their tireless and courageous work in bringing hope to the suffering population.

Uruguay strongly condemns the repeated attacks on civilian targets in Yemen — indiscriminate air strikes, mortar and missile attacks that destroy hospitals, schools, markets, residential buildings and infrastructure, and cluster bombs, anti-personnel mines and snipers, which all wreak havoc on the civilian population. We also denounce the attacks launched from within Yemen on holy sites in Saudi Arabia and on shipping in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait. All players in Yemen are demonstrating a complete disregard for the rules governing armed conflict and causing deep suffering and disastrous consequences for the civilian population trapped in the combat areas.

In both Yemen and Syria, we are witnessing unprecedented levels of dehumanization. In that regard, allow me to make special reference to the terrorist attack — I repeat, the terrorist attack — carried out on 8 October in Sana'a on a community centre where a funeral was taking place and in which more than 650 people died and more than 500 were injured. I refer to it as a terrorist attack because in this country, where I was educated and have lived for many years, I was taught that if it walks like a duck and talks like a duck, with its distinctive quack, then we must acknowledge that it is, in fact, a duck. The operation to which I just referred was carried out using tactics that are usually employed by terrorists. It was a surprise attack and timed to occur when the highest number of people were in attendance. There was one explosion, followed by a deliberate pause for several minutes to allow first responders to arrive, and then a second explosion. That is a typical terrorist operation but, in this particular case, two explosions occurred to ensure maximum destruction.

In the various cultures, societies and religions represented within the Organization, we all have similar traditions in order to pay tribute to life and death. We celebrate births and we grieve when someone dies. I wonder which of our societies, cultures, religions or gods justifies a terrorist attack on people attending a funeral. Who would feel so all-powerful to order such barbarity? Who would feel that much above reproach to carry out such an atrocity?

Furthermore, that attack was not carried out with homemade weapons. No improvised explosive devices were used. No conventional or barrel bombs were used, nor were cars or trucks loaded with explosives employed. The Panel of Experts on Yemen stated that, in the ruins of the community centre, they found the remnants of a clearly identified sophisticated guidance system for a specific type of aerially launched bomb. The type of bomb used has the unique feature of being encased in a hard steel shell that allows the bomb to penetrate a concrete structure and explode only after it hits the ground. Although on a smaller scale, I think that it is similar to the so-called bunker-busting bombs that are being used liberally throughout Aleppo. There is also information that that type of guidance system is manufactured only by two companies in the world, while the bomb that was used is manufactured by only one company. It is clear that neither the guidance system nor the bombs used can be acquired on the black market. They can be sourced only through Government-to-Government deals, and at very high prices. In the Spanish language we say that weapons are loaded by the devil, but weapons are fired by man and the responsibility is borne by the person pressing the launch button or pulling the trigger, as well as by the individual who facilitates access to the weapon in the first place.

It goes without saying that attempts to explain what occurred have already begun, with claims that it was an inadvertent mistake caused by inaccurate intelligence and that extensive investigations are under way to determine the facts of what occurred. I would point out that in this case we are talking about two inadvertent mistakes, as two attacks were carried out. In addition, may I mention what extraordinary precision must be required to repeat the same mistake on the same community centre. I wonder if it was the same type of mistake that led Médecins sans Frontières to evacuate six hospitals in Yemen on account of the repeated air attacks it suffered, despite the fact that the geographic coordinates of the exact location of those hospitals were communicated and sent to all parties concerned. It appears that someone continues to commit the same mistakes. In those cases it was also said that extensive investigations would be carried out to determine the facts but, thus far, we have no information whatsoever about who carried out the attacks or who supplied the bombs that were used.

It should be pointed out that the Council has not been able to issue even a statement condemning the horrendous attack carried out on 8 October in Sana'a. It seems that nothing can move the Council.

Neither excuses nor laments, be it because a mistake was made or because of a claimed attack against terrorists, will raise from the dead the hundreds of children, women and elderly persons lying crushed

beneath the ruins in Sana'a and Aleppo. Uruguay condemns all attacks against civilians, be it in Yemen, Syria, Iraq or elsewhere, irrespective of whom the victims are. We cannot condemn aerial attacks that kill civilians in Syria but remain mute in the face of similar ones in Yemen. There is no place for double standards in this respect, as we are frequently reminded by our colleague Rafael Ramirez Carreño. Those responsible for these appalling atrocities and their accomplices must be held accountable for their crimes.

It is time for a cessation of hostilities and a return to the negotiating table. We all know very well that these conflicts have no military solution. The only way of resolving them is through political agreements that are negotiated directly between the parties.

At the risk of repeating myself, I wish to state once again with total conviction that Colombia is providing the world with an exemplary model of an unrelenting quest for peace. But, of course, in order to do this, a great deal of courage is required, not just the superficial valour demonstrated by beating one's chest and the arrogance of brandishing weapons, but, rather, the deep-rooted courage to extend one's hand to the enemy, clasping an olive branch as a sign of peace.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I wish to thank Ismail, Stephen and Muhannad for their very powerful briefings. They all are doing vital work on this issue, and, as Security Council penholder on Yemen, I want to reiterate at this meeting today our appreciation for their tireless efforts.

As they all have highlighted, the sheer scale of the crisis facing the people of Yemen means that there can be no letup in our efforts. It is a political crisis, a humanitarian crisis, a crisis where the violence simply will not end. As a result, civilians continue to suffer, with more than 14 million people now food-insecure, and more than 21 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. That is the tragic cost of the ongoing conflict in Yemen.

In response, we all know what needs to happen. First, the violence must stop. There needs to be an enduring, meaningful cessation of hostilities. I was proud of the United Kingdom's efforts to help secure a ceasefire early this month, but it is clear that three days is simply not enough. We therefore call on the parties to renew their commitment and implement an immediate, sustainable cease-fire.

In support of that goal, we also need to make sure that the De-escalation and Coordination Committee has the support, training and resources that it needs. The Committee is a crucial mechanism for building trust and addressing violations. If the Yemeni parties are serious about peace, they should engage with it fully.

Sadly, any signs of de-escalation have been elusive of late. Only last week, a long-range missile was fired from Sa'dah into Saudi Arabia, reportedly at the King Abdulaziz international airport, north of Jeddah. This attack by the Houthi and Saleh loyallists was provocative and unacceptable. All sides need to show restraint.

We were shocked and appalled by the terrible loss of life in the airstrikes on the funeral hall in Sana'a earlier this month. We immediately underlined our deep concerns at the ministerial level with the Saudi Government. More than 140 people died that day. Elbio has just spoken very powerfully about it, and I share his disappointment and his regret at the fact that the Security Council was unable to agree on the draft press statement that the United Kingdom had circulated, which would have strongly condemned the attack.

Despite this failure, the United Kingdom is clear that there must be accountability for that attack. The release of an initial investigation by the coalition's Joint Incidents Assessment Team is a positive step in that direction.

Stopping the violence is just the first step, and even that will not be enough to help the millions of people in need of assistance in Yemen. Regardless of progress on the ceasefire, we also need to make concerted strides on improving the humanitarian situation. In the General Assembly last month, the United Kingdom hosted an event that raised $100 million for Yemen; half of that money came from United Kingdom itself. The international community and United Nations agencies also committed to strengthening their response. But money alone is never enough. It counts for very little, in fact, when aid cannot get through. So let us call on the parties to take every step possible to improve humanitarian access, so that we can help alleviate the suffering of the millions in need.

Ultimately, for all of this — the cessation of hostilities and the humanitarian access — to be sustainable, we need the stability that comes only from a political process, and that requires a compromise between the parties. We therefore welcome Ismail's presentation of the road map to the Yemeni parties; it

sets out how that compromise can be achieved, it says clearly the security and political steps that the parties must take to reach a peaceful resolution.

While the path ahead on the political track has become clearer, it is still a path that has yet to be followed fully. We are disappointed at the continuing failure of the Houthis and Saleh to engage on the Sana'a security plan, in defiance of resolution 2216 (2015), and by President Hadi's public rejection of the road map. We hope that he will now receive it and engage on it in good faith. In fact, we call on all parties to engage in good faith with the Special Envoy and to return to negotiations on the basis of the road map and in a spirit of compromise.

As they do so, the Special Envoy will have the full support of the United Kingdom for his efforts to bring the parties together. We take note of his requests just now for full Security Council support, and, as penholder on this issue, we will continue to work on a draft Security Council resolution calling on all parties to do four things: first, return to an immediate cessation of hostilities; secondly, return to negotiations on the basis of the road map; thirdly, bring about accountability for alleged breaches of international humanitarian law; and, fourthly, allow unhindered access to humanitarian aid.

We pledge to continue working with our partners on this resolution in support of the Special Envoy and all his efforts on the road map and on the cessation of hostilities, and, ultimately, on bringing peace to Yemen.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would like to express my gratitude to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed; Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien; and Mr. Muhannad Hadi of the World Food Programme (WFP) for their comprehensive briefings today. The situation on the ground is dire.

I will focus first on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Hadi vividly described for us. Civilians are the tragic victims of the failure to end the fighting and reach a political agreement. Japan commends the United Nations and all humanitarian workers in Yemen for their tireless efforts under extremely difficult circumstances.

We heard from Under-Secretary-General O'Brien today that 80 per cent of Yemenis are in need of basic humanitarian aid, which underlines the seriousness of this crisis. We also heard that the number may increase further. Japan, together with other international partners, is providing support to help meet these basic needs. We have announced our renewed commitment to financially supporting the United Nations and other international bodies in scaling up operations in Yemen. Food security, health and education are priority areas.

Collapsing public services and the deteriorating economy have only further worsened the devastating humanitarian situation. We were told by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and WFP today about the serious humanitarian problems caused by the destruction of the social infrastructure. We are also concerned by the recent developments surrounding the Central Bank and its relocation from Sana'a to Aden. Japan calls upon the Government of Yemen to avoid taking measures that may affect the activities of commercial banks and stresses the importance of the Central Bank serving the interests of all Yemenis.

A halt to military activities is essential if we are to achieve fundamental solutions to the humanitarian and economic crises in Yemen. One and a half years have already passed since the intensified fighting began. The Yemeni people are deeply suffering and exhausted from the continuous air strikes, shelling and fighting on the ground. All military activities, including attacks beyond the Yemeni territories, must be halted immediately.

Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed informed us today that he presented the Yemeni Government and the Houthi-General People's Congress delegation with a Yemen road map to address security and political arrangements. This may lead the way to the practical implementation of the three fundamental components for peace and stability in Yemen, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and resolution 2216 (2015). Japan welcomes the Special Envoy's work on the road map.

It is unclear, however, whether this document is being seriously considered by the Yemeni parties. Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed told us that President Mansour Hadi has rejected the road map. In the statement issued yesterday, the Houthi-General People's Congress complained that the road map does not contain essential elements for the solution. Although uncertainties remain, it is time for the parties to take their seats at the negotiating table and to immediately resume face-to-face consultations. The parties should undertake good-

faith negotiations under the mediation of the United Nations to reach an agreement.

Now that Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed has presented the road map, there may be a chance to advance the political process. What then should the Council's next step be? I believe that the answer is to send a strong, unified message to the parties. First, we, the Security Council, must call on the parties to resume negotiations immediately, to respect the cessation of hostilities and to allow and facilitate unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access. The group of 18 and some States Members of the United Nations have influence on the parties, but the Council must also play a proactive role. Equally importantly, we must ensure that the negotiations bear fruit. While adopting a resolution is our basic and traditional measure for ensuring implementation, one potential route is for the President of the Security Council to present our unified message at the beginning of the negotiations when they commence.

We are now at a critical juncture for Yemen's future and I would like to request Special Envoy Ould Cheikh Ahmed to redouble his efforts. We strongly encourage convening a new round of negotiations. In addition, the Special Envoy's direct communication with key stakeholders, including President Hadi, Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi and Ali Abdullah Saleh, is crucial to push the political process forward. I would appreciate hearing from Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed about the results of meetings with these figures at our next briefing. Japan will continue to support Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed's efforts.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the Russian delegation and wish you a successful presidency of the Security Council during this month.

At the outset, with regard to the issue of Yemen, I would like to underscore the aspects that Egypt, the Arab member of the Council, considers red lines, which must not be crossed or breached under any condition and for any reason.

First, Egypt believes that the Government of the Yemeni President, Mr. Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, is the only legitimate Government in Yemen. It is the only Government recognized by Egypt and by other members of the international community. Egypt cannot acknowledge the existence of any entity that seeks to hijack the authority of the Government, whether it calls itself a revolutionary council or a supreme political council or any other name. We support any form of settlement agreed on by the Yemeni parties that would ensure comprehensive and wide-scale participation of all factions of Yemeni society.

Secondly, Egypt cannot accept under any condition any threats to the freedom of navigation in Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea. The protection of the freedom of navigation is a lifeline for Egypt and for international trade and transportation. It is at the heart of our Egyptian and Arab national security.

Thirdly, Egypt cannot accept under any pretext the continued attacks on the security of Saudi Arabia, including the launching of ballistic missiles against civilian centres in Saudi Arabia and the violating of its border security. The security of Gulf States and the security of the Arab world is part and parcel of the security of Egypt. In that regard, we vigorously condemn the Houthis' attack on Mecca in an unacceptable precedent. We cannot stay silent in the face of this violation of the sanctity of holy sites and this disregard for innocent civilians and the sentiments of Muslims around the world.

Having reaffirmed these principles, I would like to address the future of the crisis and its settlement.

First, Egypt believes that there is no alternative to a political settlement to the Yemini crisis. Further delay in reaching such a settlement will only lead to more killing, humanitarian suffering and destruction. In this regard, Egypt commends and appreciates the efforts of the United Nations over the past month. We encourage all parties to engage seriously in all efforts aimed at reaching a settlement in Yemen based on relevant Security Council resolutions and statements. These statements call for the return of the legitimate Government; the withdrawal of the Houthis from cities and the handing over of their heavy and medium-sized weapons; and ensuring the return of inclusive the political institutions.

Secondly, agreeing on a cessation of hostilities as part of the political settlement is of vital importance, given the continued suffering of Yemenis, regardless of their political affiliations, and the dire humanitarian needs and the need to ensure access to humanitarian assistance in all parts of Yemen. This is a priority for Egypt and the international community.

In conclusion, Egypt will continue to fully support the efforts of the United Nations and the Special Envoy to reach a settlement to the tragedy in Yemen.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I would like to thank the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed; the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Stephen O'Brien; and the World Food Programme Regional Director, Mr. Muhannad Hadi, for their briefings and for their work and for their support of Yemen and its people.

It is now more than a year and a half since the attempt by Houthi forces to seize control of the Government of Yemen prompted the collapse of the political transition and the outbreak of the current conflict. It is now clear that none of the parties can achieve their aims through military force.

Today's briefers have underlined just how bad the situation on the ground has become. Tragically — as we have been saying for too long — Yemeni civilians are paying a heavy price for the ongoing hostilities. More than 10,000 Yemenis have been killed, and most Yemenis are now in need of humanitarian assistance.

Images of the more 370,000 severely malnourished children remind us of the fragility of Yemen's food supply. Although the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen continues to play an essential role in managing food imports, a lack of port capacity means ships face long delays, further inflating the cost of food and fuel. This, compounded by the increasingly serious risk of economic collapse, threatens to put millions of Yemenis at risk of starvation.

The collapse of the public health system also means that millions of Yemenis lack access to even the most basic medical services. This medical crisis is compounded by the ban on commercial flights in and out of Sana'a, which prevents critically injured civilians from getting medical assistance elsewhere. We call for this ban to be lifted immediately.

Both sides have also regularly fallen short of their obligations to protect civilians caught up in this conflict. The coalition airstrike against a funeral in Sana'a on 8 October was a shocking example of this failure. It also makes the reports over the weekend of airstrikes against a Houthi-held prison all the more disturbing. Urgent steps are needed to provide accountability for these actions and to ensure that such incidents do not happen again. We stress once again the need for all parties fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

The conflict has created a conducive environment for terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to expand their influence and reach. Recent attacks on shipping in the Bab-el-Mandeb have further demonstrated the emergence of other strategic threats from this conflict.

Ultimately it is only by ending hostilities that we can restore stability and end the suffering of the Yemeni people. This must be our central focus and most urgent priority. In this regard, we are deeply disappointed at the failure to extend the recent ceasefire brokered by the United Nations Special Envoy. An enduring ceasefire is a necessary step towards a more positive trajectory for Yemen. We urge all parties to agree to a sustained ceasefire as soon as possible.

For some time we have appeared frustratingly close to an agreement on how to end this conflict. The key elements of a deal have been evident for some months, with the main points of contention being their sequencing. The parties have been presented with a credible road map for security and political arrangements to end the conflict and resume an inclusive political transition. We recognize that this road map requires difficult concessions from all parties, but flat-out rejection is not acceptable.

The alternative is a further prolonging of the current bloody stalemate that can achieve little other than heaping further misery on the Yemeni people and creating longer-term problems for the country and region.We urge leaders on both sides to put the interests of their people first and accept this road map as the basis for ending this tragic conflict, and to take it forward in a spirit of flexibility and compromise. History will not judge kindly those who seek to delay or derail these efforts, and neither should the Council.

In the coming weeks, the Council needs to focus on doing all it can to support the efforts of the United Nations Special Envoy and others to end the violence. It must also send a clear signal to the Yemeni parties that the international community expects them to resume meaningful negotiations with each other towards achieving a sustainable end to the conflict, and that that spoilers will not be tolerated.

We stand ready to work with Council members on anything that might be useful to add pressure on the parties to resolve this conflict.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts and contributions in the presidency of the Council to promote the Council's work. I would also like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed; the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Stephen O'Brien; and the World Food Programme Regional Director, Mr. Muhannad Hadi, for their briefings.

At present, the situation in Yemen remains complicated. Peace talks are stagnant, conflicts are ongoing and the humanitarian situation is grave. China is concerned about the situation and empathizes with the suffering Yemeni people. Political dialogue is the only way to achieve lasting peace in Yemen. China therefore welcomes Special Envoy Ould Cheikh Ahmed's contact with the parties concerned and his active mediation.

In the current circumstances, China maintains that the parties to the conflict in Yemen and the international community should take the following actions expeditiously.

First, parties to the conflict should exercise restraint and cease hostilities as early as possible so as to create the necessary conditions for relaunching peace talks and improving the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

Secondly, it is imperative to further support Special Envoy Ould Cheikh Ahmed's mediation, so as to have a positive influence on the parties concerned, and to push for peace through negotiation.

Thirdly, parties to the peace talks should exercise sincerity and flexibility, narrow their differences through consultations, and properly address a series of sensitive issues, including withdrawal, disarmament and the establishment of a Government of national accord, so as to reach a comprehensive solution that fits the national condition in Yemen and addresses the concerns of all the parties.

Fourthly, parties to the conflict should take effective measures to alleviate the humanitarian situation. They should follow international humanitarian law and actively cooperate with international relief efforts. We hope that the international community will join hands in alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, whose valuable and continued efforts we welcome; Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs; and Muhannad Hadi, World Food Programme Regional Director, for their briefings and their commitment.

As we have just heard, the humanitarian situation in Yemen is extremely serious. There are several aspects that we find particularly troubling.

First is the attacks on the civilian population. France firmly condemned the attack on 8 October, where, according to the United Nations, there were 140 deaths and many wounded. We cannot stress enough how essential it is that all parties respect international humanitarian law.

The degradation of the health situation is very troubling. Yemen's health-care system is almost completely destroyed, and Yemenis no longer have access to basic health services. Today more than 19 million people — approximately 80 per cent of the population — have difficulty in accessing drinking water and basic sanitation. In these circumstances, the outbreak of cholera — with 6 deaths, 61 confirmed cases to date and more than a million potentially contaminated people — is particularly disturbing and shows the extent to which the situation has deteriorated.

The picture painted by the World Food Programme indicates that part of the population is on the brink of famine. There has been no significant improvement for months, especially in the regions most affected by the conflict, and today 14 million Yemenis — over half the population — live in conditions of food insecurity, with 7 million of them in a food emergency situation. Malnutrition rates have also reached alarming heights.

The survival of millions of Yemenis depends today on the immediate and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid, as well as on the re-establishment of services that are essential for survival. More than ever, the parties must ensure total, secure, permanent and unhindered humanitarian access, pursuant to their international obligations. In particular, the parties must facilitate and guarantee the work on the ground by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Given these tragic circumstances, the recent military developments are unacceptable, and it is with great concern that we have noted that the 72-hour

ceasefire last week was not only not fully observed, but it was also not renewed. Attacks on vessels in the Red Sea and against Saudi territory must cease. Moreover, it is essential to determine precisely which country is providing arms to the Houthis.

We once again call on parties to commit to and honour a new and immediate cessation of hostilities, which would provide a respite for the local population and enable a resumption of negotiations. As we have stated time and again, the only solution to the conflict is a political one. We deeply regret the rejection of the peace plan proposed by the Special Envoy. We are ready, in the Security Council, to determine how to pressure the parties to the Yemeni conflict to shoulder their responsibilities. The Yemeni population has been subjected to untold suffering. Each party must make the necessary concessions and put their individual interests aside. Each party must be able to commit to the road map for peace and its implementation.

The basic parameters of the settlement are known to one and all, as they were the result of in-depth consultations over several months in Kuwait, New York and, in recent days, in Riyadh and Sana'a. It is crucial that the international community, particularly regional Powers, support the process and not fuel the risk of escalation. We reiterate our full support for the tireless efforts of the Special Envoy and his road map — his commitment and determination to bring the parties to an agreement are remarkable and are to be encouraged.

The longer the conflict lasts, the more difficult it will be to deal with its long-term consequences. The more the humanitarian situation deteriorates, the greater the reconstruction needs will be. The longer the instability persists in the country — not allowing the legitimate Government to exercise the control that it should have — the greater the risk of terrorism, which threatens not only Yemen but, as we know, the entire world.

In conclusion, I would point out once again our support for the efforts of the Special Envoy, who spares no effort or time in securing the commitment of all parties in restoring peace and stability in Yemen. We fully trust him in reaching a definitive proposal that will lead to an agreement. In our national capacity, we are fully behind him and we will use every opportunity to engage in dialogue with our regional partners to advocate a cessation of hostilities and a peaceful settlement in Yemen. Let us together show that it is possible to have a unified Security Council in order to settle the crisis, under the aegis of the United Nations. It is our responsibility to do so, and if we pool our efforts we will have the means.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Cheikh Ahmed, Under-Secretary-General O'Brien and World Food Programme Regional Director Hadi for their briefings. I pay special thanks to Mr. Hadi for bearing witness on behalf of Yemenis whose voices, as we all know, are too rarely heard in this conflict.

Recently, a father of four children in Sana'a reportedly asked his daughters to post their feelings about this war on Facebook. Fifteen-year-old Kholud wrote:

> "We, the children of Yemen, want to achieve our hopes: to study and play and achieve our goals."

That is something one would expect almost any child of Kholud's age to want. But she went on to say that in this conflict:

> "We sleep afraid, we wake up afraid and leave our homes afraid."

Kholud's younger sister, 14-year-old Asma, wrote:

> "We are afraid of catastrophe, as it is painful when a person kills others; mothers, fathers and children."

And their youngest sister, 12-year-old Haneen, reported:

> "Every day, the noises get louder and louder next to us."

Although these voices are not with us enough, whether here in the Council or in our regional or international media, when we do hear from people on the ground, people like Kholud, Asma and Haneen, they are pretty consistent. They demand, or they plead, for an end to their suffering. We, as members of the Security Council, need to make the same demand, and we need to be united in doing so. The parties must stop escalating their attacks. They must, at long last, commit to peace, and we need immediate progress on three fronts: an immediate cessation of hostilities, a humanitarian surge — the likes of which we have not seen in Yemen for the life of the conflict — and a prompt return to political talks.

First, the United States calls on the parties to recommit immediately to the cessation of hostilities, which means halting all military actions on the ground,

in the air and at sea. That includes an end to shelling and an end to air strikes. A sustained cessation of hostilities is necessary to give the Special Envoy the space he needs to engage the parties on the terms of a political solution to the conflict.

There is very little good news in Yemen, but one small piece of good news is that we have seen that the parties can reduce the violence in Yemen when they show the will to do so. For all of the concerns that all of us have about command and control, from April to August this year, the cessation of hostilities led to a significant decrease in air strikes and violence, and therefore in suffering on the ground. I do not think we can overstate the success; the cessation was far from perfect, but it provided some respite for Yemen's civilians and it provided a backdrop to help encourage talks to continue. We need to get back to where we were with the cessation, and it needs to be improved.

But since the Kuwait talks ended nearly three months ago, the parties have intensified their attacks. Last Friday, forces loyal to the Houthi and former President Ali Abdullah Saleh reportedly launched a missile from Yemen towards Mecca and Jeddah, one among several recent missile launches. The United States condemns those missile launches in the strongest terms. Those attacks on Saudi territory are an obvious attempt to derail the political process, and they must cease. As we have emphasized, every country has a right to defend itself, and the United States remains fully committed to the security of Saudi Arabia.

It is also incumbent upon the Saudi-led coalition and the forces of the Yemeni Government to refrain from taking steps to escalate the violence and to commit to the cessation of hostilities. After 19 months of fighting, it should be clear that there is absolutely no military solution to the conflict. Those who believe that if one increases military pressure, it will strengthen one's hand in political negotiations, has 19 months of evidence not shown that it is not the case. Increasing military pressure and initiating new operations, at this point, is only going to prolong the unnecessary suffering. The longer the conflict continues, the more that Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula will use this vacuum to expand its presence and launch new attacks.

Air strikes that hit schools, hospitals and other civilian objects have to stop. In many cases, these strikes have damaged key infrastructure that is essential to delivering humanitarian aid in Yemen. The United States strongly condemns the air strike on mourners at a reception hall in Sana'a earlier this month. The strike left 140 mourners dead and more than 600 injured. The coalition has accepted responsibility, and we look forward to further reporting on their investigation of the attack, including on concrete measures taken to establish accountability, compensate victims and make certain that such strikes are not repeated. The United States will continue to underscore to the coalition, the need to take all feasible measures to reduce civilian casualties and target precisely, including verifying targets against a no-strike list.

We also strongly condemn Houthi-Saleh forces for all the cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia and the shelling of populated areas, especially in Taiz. On 4 October, the United Nations reported that artillery fire in the centre of Taiz killed at least 10 civilians, including 6 children, and injured 17 others. The civilian death toll underscores again that the parties need to commit to the cessation of hostilities.

That brings me to my second point, which is the need for a humanitarian surge of a different order. The statistics that Under-Secretary-General O'Brien and Mr. Hadi have presented show that the problem is getting worse. Let us take only one as an example. The number of 370,000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition has increased from that of 320,000 reported last year. Severe acute malnutrition means one thing — unless these kids get an immediate course of medical treatment, they will likely die. Let us consider that for a moment. Hundreds of thousands of children — infants and babies in many cases — are on the brink of dying not because of bombs or shells, but just because they cannot get a simple course of nutritional supplements. Millions more are at risk.

Let us therefore focus on how we can respond. All Member States should demand here at the United Nations and in our bilateral relationships and conversations that the parties allow complete and unfettered humanitarian access. That means that authorities on the ground need to approve the United Nations plans to distribute aid and let convoys through checkpoints. It also means that roads, bridges and ports that are vital for delivering aid need to be protected from the fighting. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) has helped facilitate imports of basic food and medicine into Yemen, and, as Mr. O'Brien has noted, it deserves all of our continued support and full cooperation from the parties.

But there are some additional steps that should be taken. The parties need to reopen the airport in Sana'a to civilian flights once again, allowing critically injured Yemenis to leave and Yemenis, who are stranded abroad and wish to return, to get back to their homes. When fuel and medicine do enter Yemen, the parties need to allow such goods to reach hospitals in all parts of the country. The cranes at Al-Hudaydah port need to be repaired and the parties should facilitate the United Nations plans to repair them so as to restore capacity at what had long been a vital port and source of influx of many goods.

At the same time, one has to stress that no amount of aid can make up for the void left by Yemen's collapsed economy. That is why we are concerned about the consequences of the Yemeni Government's decision to move the central bank. We call on the Government to continue paying salaries nationwide. Those salaries are one of the few sources of income left for many Yemeni families. I was struck by Mr. Hadi's account that often just a small amount of money is what is needed for a mother to be able move from one part of the country to a place where a nutritional supplement is available. When salaries are taken away, a critical sources of income is taken away, and it becomes more likely that infants and children will die of starvation.

My third and final point is on the urgent need for a political solution. The Special Envoy has presented both parties with a credible and balanced road map for ending the conflict together with the security plan for Sana'a. The road map addresses the concerns of the Yemeni Government about sequenced withdrawals from the key cities of Sana'a, Taiz and Al-Hudaydah, and it addresses the concerns of the Houthi and the General People's Congress about the transition of executive authority. The road map is a basis for a negotiation. It is not a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. Now is not the time for any of the parties to hedge, stall or add new conditions. The parties should engage with the Special Envoy immediately to hammer out the details of a final agreement. Of course, moving forward with this road map will require the parties in Yemen to compromise, which is not a strong suit. It is long past time for them to do so. The people of Yemen cannot afford for the parties to continue acting on the illusion that they will achieve a total victory. It will not happen.

Let me conclude. Earlier, I mentioned the problem of severe acute malnutrition, joining many voices around this table. A recent BBC documentary entitled *Starving Yemen* profiled one such case, that of a toddler named Abdul Rachman who was born at the start of the conflict. Abdul Rachman is an 18-month-old infant now but weighs as much as a six-month-old baby. He is also lactose intolerant, requiring a baby formula that used to be widely available before the conflict, but now his family cannot find the specific formula anywhere. Looking at Abdul Rachman, his mother finally breaks down in the documentary. She says, "I am losing my son, and there is nothing that I can do about it. I have seen children like him on television. They die".

At the eleventh hour, an especially determined doctor just barely managed to find a three-month supply of formula to keep Abdul Rachman alive. But let us consider again that there are more than 370,000 kids suffering severe acute malnutrition like Abdul Rachman, with just as many anguished mothers at their bedsides who have seen kids like these on television but never imagined that they would be holding one like them. The Special Envoy is offering a way out of the fighting. The plight of children like Abdul Rachman should compel the parties to negotiate and cease hostilities immediately. And we, as members of the Council, should unite in demanding it.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal thanks you, Sir, for convening this meeting. My delegation would like to thank Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Muhannad Hadi for their briefings and poignant descriptions that they have provided us with regard to the situation in Yemen. Their combined work on the ground allows us to entertain the hope of the cessation of hostilities, better access to humanitarian aid and a final political solution.

Senegal regrets the deteriorating situation in the country and the innumerable lives lost, including those who died during a funeral procession, which was targeted on 8 October. We must remind all the parties to the conflict, including the Houthis and their allies, their obligation to protect civilians in accordance with international human rights laws. Unconditional and uninterrupted access to humanitarian aid must be provided to all those in need of it. Once again, we would like to recall that the challenge to the legitimacy of the Yemeni Government is at the basis of the crisis. The conflict has overflowed in the form of missile attacks on Saudi Arabia in Jeddah and the holy site of Mecca. Senegal vigorously condemns those missile launchings and agrees with Egypt that that is a red line, which must not be crossed.

The political solution remains possible on the basis of negotiations between the parties, taking into account the initiative proposed by the Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as its implementation mechanism, and in line with Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

My delegation would like to condemn the presence of Da'esh and Al-Qaida in Yemen. We know that terrorist groups are the only ones that profit from the instability of countries in crisis, exacerbating the threat of terrorism throughout the world. My Government therefore calls on the parties to the conflict, particularly the Houthis and their allies, to quickly resume in good faith negotiations and show a realistic attitude and mutual trust-building, so as to foster the necessary conditions to end the crisis which has disastrous humanitarian and security implications.

Senegal urgently calls on the international community to support the humanitarian action plan crafted for Yemen aimed at providing humanitarian assistance, which is vital for millions of individuals. In the same vein, Senegal encourages the continued efforts of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism, taking into account the importance of resuming port and airport activities so that highly needed aid, including fuel, gets to Yemen.

In his briefing, Mr. O'Brien stated that there can be no humanitarian solution to the crisis in Yemen. The only solution is political. Senegal, together with the other members of the Security Council, reiterates its support for the Special Envoy's efforts to find a swift political solution to the crisis.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): At the outset, I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, and the Russian delegation on your successful steering of the work of the Security Council during the month of October. We are grateful to Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien and the Regional Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. Hadi, for their briefings and for their commitment to Yemen and its people.

Regarding the political process, we praise Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmedfor doing his utmost by working with all parties to the conflict in order to spell out the technical details of a peace agreement and find a political solution to the devastating conflict. The latest proposal of a road map for a cessation of hostilities and the resumption of political dialogue on the country's future is a viable path for the solution to the Yemeni crisis that we would like to see embraced by the warring parties. We call on the Houthis and Saleh's followers to stop their deadly military offensives, and encourage them to accept the proposals of withdrawing their military forces from the capital. We further encourage President Hadi to foster a sense of flexibility and a spirit of compromise.

However, it is most regrettable that President Mansour Hadi and the Houthis have rejected the road map proposal on the grounds that it is not a balanced solution. President Hadi and the Houthis should be open to compromise, taking into account the devastating impact of the conflict on the Yemeni people and its dangerous repercussions on the region as a whole, with the terrorists of Al-Qaida exploiting the situation to advance their sinister agenda. Maintaining an inflexible stance and preconditions is not the best course of action to engage in meaningful negotiations towards a cessation of hostilities.

Enough is enough. We strongly condemn the proxy war being waged against the Yemeni people by regional and other Powers and by the Yemeni parties to the conflict themselves. Sadly, some countries that boast of being the top providers of humanitarian aid to victims of conflict are also the main suppliers of weapons and training to those who indiscriminately bomb civilians and prolong the war just for the sake of promoting dubious strategic objectives, in absolute denial of the basic interests of the Yemeni people.

We are all well aware of the devastating impact the fighting has had on the civilian population in Yemen, as well as on the country's economy. Civilians, including children, continue to suffer the heaviest burden of the conflict, with vital infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, being bombed and destroyed. The briefings of Under-Secretary-General O'Brien and Regional Director Hadi portrayed a situation that is completely unsustainable and a catastrophe of incalculable dimensions.

We take this opportunity to call once again on all the parties of the Yemeni conflict to work towards a permanent cessation of hostilities and refrain from air strikes, ground fighting and shelling, especially in populated areas. It is imperative that the parties constructively engage with the Special Envoy in order to overcome the lack of mutual trust. The only solution is a political compromise and putting an end to external meddling in the conflict.

In order to avoid the deepening humanitarian and economic catastrophe that would in turn fuel the criminal and terrorist networks in the country and throughout the region, all political stakeholders, as well as the international community and the Security Council in particular, are called on to uphold their responsibilities by redoubling their efforts in support of the Special Envoy's mediation to foster confidence-building measures for a more favourable negotiated environment.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, I congratulate the Russian Federation on the way in which it has led the deliberations of the Security Council this month.

After having carefully listened to our excellent briefers today, I will pick up on the eloquent comment made by the Ambassador of Angola: "Enough is enough." That was very eloquent. The conclusion I have drawn from the briefers today is that Yemen is facing a threefold collapse on the humanitarian, political and economic and financial fronts.

As far as the humanitarian collapse is concerned, today we have heard a whole slue of figures. I first would like to pay tribute to the 10,000 victims and then I would to like to particularly focus on the plight of the 10 million children suffering from malnutrition and at risk of losing an entire generation. That goes hand in hand with the enormous difficulties we are experiencing in our efforts to provide humanitarian aid to Yemen. I believe that Samantha Power has urged us all to do our part to facilitate access to humanitarian aid in Yemen. We stand committed to her appeal and join her in calling on all parties. We also have a humanitarian plan that, regrettably, has been financed only to 26 per cent so far.

The second crisis that is upon Yemen is a political collapse. It is political because, on the one hand, the road map, which in our view is a reasonable and balanced, has been rejected; and on the other, because we are seeing indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population. To that end, I align myself with the eloquent statement made by the Ambassador of Uruguay. As far as the road map is concerned, Mr. Ould Sheikh Ahmed can rest assured that he has our full support. I know that he will be returning shortly with a view to crafting an agreement around the road map, and in those efforts he will have the full backing of the Spanish delegation. Regarding the indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population, we of course uphold the idea that said crimes cannot go unpunished.

The third collapse in Yemen is economic and financial. Before arriving to today's meeting, I had intended to ask our briefers about the situation of the Central Bank reserves. Well, we have such excellent briefers that the economic and financial situation in Yemen could not be clearer. The situation is critical; they are going to have to stop paying salaries, which will further exacerbate the political and humanitarian collapse. What will happen if salaries go unpaid? The result will be bleak for future of Yemen. It will mean that administration and all institutions will collapse and the process of reconstruction will become extremely difficult — almost impossible. Economic support for Yemen in the current circumstances is therefore absolutely essential.

What is the message that I would like to convey to my fellow members of the Council? It is very simple. I listened very carefully to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, who very clearly outlined the elements of a draft resolution that I believe will bring change to the situation in Yemen. The elements of said draft resolution are, first, an immediate cessation of hostilities; it is quite clear that there can be no military solution to the crisis in Yemen. The resumption of negotiations is the second element — I again reiterate my support our Special Envoy — followed, thirdly, by accountability for the violations of international humanitarian law, and fourthly, unhindered access to humanitarian aid.

I would like to conclude by striking a positive note, echoing what the French Ambassador had to say so clearly, which is that consensus in Yemen is possible. We trust that that is the case. Let us rally around the United Kingdom's draft resolution to truly bring about a change to this currently desperate situation.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): My delegation is very grateful to Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien and Mr. Muhannad Hadi of the World Food Programme for their briefings.

Malaysia is gravely concerned about the very bleak picture of the situation on the ground, with the escalation in violence, the attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, the threat of famine, the collapse of the health system and the threat of a cholera outbreak. Regrettaby, unlike other crises in the region,

the humanitarian crisis in Yemen has remained largely under the radar. Last week, a side event on Yemen was held at the United Nations where we were shown a documentary by the BBC on the threat of famine in the country. While the international community's attention is focused on deaths due to ongoing fighting, we have largely overlooked the slow but widespread deaths brought about by starvation and lack of medical treatment. Mothers have had to watch their children and babies wither away before their very eyes due to the lack of milk, food and medicine. Even bringing their children to the hospital did little to improve their situation due to the collapse of the country's health system and the dire lack of food, fuel and medicine. That situation is simply unacceptable.

As we have heard today, a staggering 14 million people in Yemen are suffering from hunger and malnutrition, over 3 million have been driven from their homes and 21 million people are in need of humanitarian aid. We call on all parties to agree to a lasting and permanent ceasefire that would facilitate the flow of desperately needed food, fuel and medical supplies into the country. We also urge the parties to open up Yemeni air space to commercial aircraft and to evacuate those in need of urgent medical treatment. We join others in condemning all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure in Yemen, including the recent attacks on the marketplace, a water well and a funeral ceremony. We also condemn attacks on Saudi territory by the Houthi militias, particularly the recent targeting of the Holy City of Makka Al-Mukarama.

We support calls by the Secretary-General for full and independent inquiries to investigate gross violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law so as to ensure justice and accountability.

The continuing conflict has also led to a marked increase in the number of children being recruited by parties to the conflict. About 2 million children are currently out of school due to the ongoing fighting and insecurity and are being deprived of their right to education. That situation has been exploited by our militias that are actively going to villages to recruit children. Some have estimated that up to one third of fighters in armed groups are children. Many of them are guarding checkpoints, but they are also on the front line fighting. Malaysia urges all parties to the conflict to adhere to their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law. All parties must make every effort to protect children, civilians and civilian objects, including in ensuring immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access.

With the breakdown in the talks in Kuwait, the conflicting parties in Yemen seem further and further away from the promising steps they had taken towards peace several months ago. The recent cessation of hostilities, as we have seen, is far from sufficient to address the humanitarian disaster in Yemen. We fully concur with the assessment by Under-Secretary-General O'Brien that the best humanitarian relief is to end the conflict. Malaysia echoes the view held by the international community that there is no military solution to the conflict. However, the conflicting parties themselves need to believe in the need for a political solution. Prolonging the violence will not benefit either side. Terrorist groups will only exploit the violence, which will lead to a further catastrophic humanitarian situation.

A peaceful resolution of the conflict in Yemen hinges on the political will of the conflicting parties themselves, but the Security Council has an important role to play in bringing about the desired outcome by exerting its authority and its influence on the relevant parties and by utilizing the various tools at its disposal. The Council must send a clear signal to the conflicting parties on the need to cease fighting and to return to the negotiating table in order to protect civilians and civilian objects, to ensure immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access and to adhere to their obligations under international law. We need to continue to support the tireless efforts of Special Envoy Ahmed to secure peace in Yemen. We urge all parties to engage constructively in negotiating the road map proposed by Mr. Ahmed, with the aim of ending the conflict and reaching a political agreement for the sake of peace and stability in Yemen and the region.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I also thank the Special Envoy for Yemen and the other briefers for their updates.

Needless to say, the briefers draw a grim picture of the significant deteriorating of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which is a cause of grave concern for all of us. The ongoing conflict has only aggravated the already existing problems in that country. There have been more than 6,800 dead and 33,800 injured only since March 2015, according to the World Health Organization. Access to Taiz, with a population of 200,000 people, continues to be limited. Nine of the

22 governorates remain at the emergency levels for food security, if not yet facing famine. Those are just a few indicators, but they are a timely reminder of the grim reality in Yemen and require our united and urgent reaction to stop what Under-Secretary-General O'Brien describes as a "man-made brutal humanitarian disaster"and to prevent the country from total collapse, as many have said already.

On a separate note, we view as equally worrying the upsurge in rocket attacks launched by the Houthi forces in Yemen against targets located in Saudi Arabia, as well as maritime targets, including United Arab Emirates vessels and United States ships. Keeping the important shipping passage of Bab Al-Mandeb safe and secure is of paramount importance for international and regional peace and stability. We also call on all sides to prevent any attacks against innocent targets. Immediate steps are needed to prevent further internationalization of the conflict.

Against that backdrop, we fully support the United Nations Special Envoy and hope that his relentless efforts will bear fruit in the form of a negotiated settlement. In that regard, the latest United Nations peace plan for Yemen deserves careful consideration. The key elements of the plan — a negotiated withdrawal from Sana'a and the handing over of heavy and medium weapons, including ballistic missiles, along with the formation of a national unity Government — appear to open a path to hard, but necessary, decisions that may lead to a durable settlement. If fulfilled, that peace initiative can become a solid foundation for the continuation of the national political dialogue, on an inclusive and non-sectarian basis, thus contributing to the full implementation of resolution 2216 (2015) and the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative.

In conclusion, the Council should do everything possible to reverse the trend that makes Yemenis, as Mr. Hadi rightly described to us, "feel forgotten by the entire world". In order to achieve that, we call on all sides of the conflict to return to negotiations immediately. As in Syria, there is no military solution to the crisis in Yemen.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to express its gratitude for the briefings delivered by Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien and Regional Director for the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe of the World Food Programme Muhannad Hadi. We thank the briefers for their testimonies.

Venezuela appreciates the commendable endeavours and facilitation efforts carried out by Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed to try and seek a political solution to the current armed conflict that has rocked Yemen for almost two years. We reiterate to him our full support for his work on the ground. Venezuela believes that negotiations will produce positive results only insofar as the parties show flexibility and commitment to achieving lasting and sustainable peace in Yemen.

Yemen is one of those cases at the Security Council that falls into the category of so-called 'silenced conflicts'. The Yemeni people are the victims of a brutal violence that is the result of intense armed conflict, in which schools, hospitals and housing are targets of indiscriminate bombing with highly advanced and expensive armaments known for their precision when aimed at any given target. We do not believe that errors are possible in that type of military attack. What does seem possible is a deliberate attempt used to punish the Yemeni civilian population — against whom even cluster munitions have been used, in clear violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

In that regard, as has been pointed out by other speakers, our country resolutely condemns the aerial attacks carried out by the coalition on a funeral procession in Sana'a on 8 October, in which 140 people were killed and 525 civilians were injured. We also condemn the bombing of hospitals run by Médecins sans Frontières, as well as the bombing of civilian sanitation centres and services. We believe that such illegal actions cannot go unpunished, for which it is essential that there be investigations into the violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law that have been committed during the conflict.

On that point our country would like to make it very clear that we categorically reject any attack on the civilian population, wherever such attacks may take place — whether in Syria, Yemen, Iraq or Palestine. The Security Council seems to remain passive when faced with such an awful reality; it has given little or no visibility to such a critical issue. We must remember that, months ago, Under-Secretary-General O'Brien

described the humanitarian situation in Yemen as being proportionately worse than that in Syria. There seems to be a brutal competition taking place in terms of the playing out of a culture of death, war and violence in the region.

The exchange of opinions we are engaged in today at this briefing meeting is a rare occurrence, as there are very few opportunities in which the Security Council discusses this issue in open format. We would therefore like to thank the President for having facilitated today's dialogue and for making it possible for us show this problem to the rest of the United Nations membership. We hope that the same will hold true with regard to other issues that are confined to closed consultations. For the sake of transparency, open meetings should be the rule, not the exception — something that is one of the shortcomings in the working methods of the Security Council.

Since Venezuela became a member of the Security Council — and just a couple of months from ending our term in this organ — we have seen with great regret how the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen has worsened as a result of the armed conflict. It is probably high time to review resolution 2216 (2015) and adapt it to the situation on the ground. In that respect, we support the road map that has been proposed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, which seeks to de-escalate and halt the conflict. Furthermore, the Security Council should as soon as possible adopt a draft resolution on the humanitarian situation that includes the establishment of humanitarian pauses and the cessation of all armed attacks, including aerial bombing. In line with its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, the Council cannot continue to remain indifferent in the face of the gravity of the events taking place in Yemen every day, and must stop seeing them as routine occurrences: business-as-usual. It is fundamental to achieve a sustained cessation of hostilities in order to provide an opportunity for humanitarian agencies on the ground to do their work. Any solution to the conflict must include, as a basic principle, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen.

Moreover, such a solution must also proscribe and condemn attacks against the territory of Saudi Arabia as well as on maritime traffic in the Red Sea. Our country express its absolute rejection of attacks against the territory of Saudi Arabia and against navigation in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait.

The Council must move forward constructively in addressing the political and humanitarian crisis affecting the brotherly people of Yemen. Members of the Security Council must address the subject objectively, with determination and commitment, putting aside national expediency and the positions of its members. We are concerned that the geopolitical agendas of certain regional actors, and some outside the region — some of them Council members — are hampering any possibility of reaching an agreement that would put an end to the current armed clashes, and are undermining diplomatic efforts led by the Special Envoy.

Although the people of Yemen are the main losers in this war, countries that manufacture and export weapons have profited outrageously by providing highly sophisticated weapons to one of the parties, in amounts that total billions of dollars. It is therefore paradoxical that countries that emphatically promoted the Arms Trade Treaty are now the ones that are stoking the armed conflict by providing sophisticated weapons for financial gain, which are then used by one the parties to intentionally violate the population's rights and international human rights law.

Venezuela reiterates that the solution to the armed conflict in Yemen lies with its citizens — its people — along with the support of the international community, as they exercise their right to self-determination. Our country will support all peaceful political attempts aimed at safeguarding the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of this brotherly nation, pursuant to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Armed clashes have plunged the country into a very grave and deplorable humanitarian crisis, as has been pointed out by all the relevant agencies of the United Nations — and revealed today in stark relief. This devastating scenario serves to highlight the urgent need to urgently respond to a problem that is having a negative impact on the humanitarian situation when it comes to providing food, medicine, water, nutrition supplements for children, psychosocial services and other basic services. We therefore call upon the parties to allow humanitarian agencies and other organizations to reach the entire population in order to allow the delivery of assistance, so as to address the most pressing needs of the Yemeni population.

It is vital to reach a political solution to the conflict as soon as possible. The institutional collapse and the current sectarian rhetoric in Yemen have benefited Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in furthering their terrorist activities, which are a threat to regional and international peace and security. We are concerned by the fact that fighters from both terrorist organizations are prepared to cooperate tactically to achieve their destabilizing aims in Yemen and the rest of the region.

Once again, we encourage the parties to make a decisive commitment to inclusive dialogue, with a view to achieving a settlement that puts an end to the hostilities and thereby achieves a solid, lasting peace in Yemen. We believe it particularly important that there be an atmosphere of mutual confidence and that confidence between the parties be re-established, in a way that tensions can be decreased and that negotiations can take place successfully. Countries with any influence on the parties must continue to work to make progress in this process.

The tragic situation and prolonged crisis in Yemen require that we not relent in our efforts to help the parties turn the tide on the atmosphere of violence that prevails in this Arab nation. We trust that the stakeholders will once again assume their commitments to find political solutions that put an end to the war and allow the people of Yemen to regain hope for peace. Our brothers and sisters in Yemen deserve to live in peace. Public discussion of these matters in the Security Council will serve to ensure that all parties are aware of the need to find a political solution together.

In conclusion, our delegation would like to acknowledge once again the efforts made by all volunteers and humanitarian personnel on the ground in Yemen who are making a contribution to helping the Yemeni people. We also appreciate the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and of its staff deployed on the ground, who are involved in the noble task of supporting the affected population under very adverse circumstances. Venezuela would like to reiterate its support for the initiative and political efforts championed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

We would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed; the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. O'Brien; and the Regional Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. Hadi, for their briefings.

We are surprised that what is taking place in Yemen has not resulted in a frenzy in the mass media, or indeed in the Security Council. Oddly, it is not being covered at the same level as the Syrian problem. We must stress that the scale of the humanitarian situation in that country on a number of parameters is even worse than that in Syria and can only be qualified as catastrophic. Fully four fifths of the 26 million people in Yemen require urgent humanitarian assistance. The country has more than 3 million internally displaced people. Approximately 14 million people are experiencing food shortages, and the infrastructure essential for daily life — medical, educational and other needs — are in ruins. Under the pretext of preventing violations of an arms embargo, there has been a ground, air and sea blockade of Yemen, which impacts first and foremost the peaceful population. There is now an acute lack of food, medicine and other basic necessities.

We would not want to exploit the issue of civilian losses, including from air strikes; however, it is impossible not to mention the cynical double standards that we are encountering. It is known, for example, that the United Kingdom has been one of the major suppliers of various kinds of weaponry in the region, which are then used against the Yemenis. Since March 2015, according *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, London has sold more than £3 billion, or $5 billion, in weapons into the region. That is not a small amount of money to be made from war. Those weapons also result in the loss of civilian lives.

The question then arises: How can a country with a clear material interest in extending the military conflict be a penholder for the Yemen file in the Security Council? Let us take the most recent draft press statement prepared by the so-called penholder. It was not simply broadly general, but it was openly weak in its discussion of an air strike, which, according to the information cited, was made against a funeral procession in Sana'a on 8 October. It was not stated who made the strike, even though the coalition has already accepted the responsibility. There was not a call for an investigation to punish those responsible. We were not in a position to support that draft, considering that,

given the atrocities committed, the toothless text would have been an insult for the Yemenis.

After that, the delegation of the United Kingdom announced they were preparing a draft resolution on Yemen, which has not yet seen the light of day. It would be interesting to know whether such a draft resolution will contain a provision establishing a no-fly zone over Sana'a, which, even before the tragedy at the funeral, was subjected to random strikes on more than one occasion. I think the time has come to review the penholdership on Yemen. We have new members preparing to become members of the Council in 2017, and we think that they could take upon themselves the responsible and objective penholding of the Yemen file in the Security Council.

Let me return to the situation in the country. Despite the ceasefire announced by the Special Envoy, it is being violated on both sides. The first violations came just several hours after the statement made by Ismail Ahmed. We hope to see the road map on settling the Yemen crisis prepared by the Special Envoy. We have heard a lot about that, but given that we understand that it does not exist on paper, it is not yet possible to evaluate it adequately. We think that it should concern moving simultaneously on political and military tracks, including a Government of national unity with the Houthis. What is important is to ensure that the parties return to the negotiating table to discuss the details. That is because the devil is in the details. That is, if both countries agree on the principles of an approach — although now there is information that one of the parties, namely, President Hadi Mansour, has already rejected the plan — then we will have a number of accompanying issues that will need to be worked through and agreed upon.

In particular, the road map, as far as we understand, does not talk about the withdrawal of coalition troops from Yemen or stopping air strikes against the territory of the country. Without that assurance, implementing any kind of agreement would be more than problematic. In turn, we would like to say that we support any and all agreements that are consensual in nature and with which all political forces in Yemen can agree. We will work actively with all parties to the conflict. The main goal is to ensure that there is a sustainable ceasefire. That is a must, both from the humanitarian and the anti-terrorist viewpoints, as well as to strengthen the parties' confidence in order to ensure that there can be a comprehensive agreement on how to settle the conflict.

Unfortunately, the clear winner in the Yemeni conflict is still the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and other terrorist and extremist groups that control whole regions in the south and east of the country. From experience in Syria, we know that we need to combat the fighters now, without putting it off for later. The earlier all political forces in Yemen pool their efforts to counter the threat of terrorists, the fewer the chances for radical Islamists to keep their positions.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to express thanks to you, Mr. President, Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the friendly Russian Federation, for your wise leadership during the deliberations of the Security Council for the month of October and for granting us this opportunity to address the Council. I would also like to express thanks to His Excellency the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, for their great efforts to reach a peace agreement to end the coup against the Yemeni State and the tragedy of war launched by the Houthi militias and the pro-Saleh forces against our people since September 2014. We also wish to thank Mr. O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and Mr. Hadi of the World Food Programme (WFP) for their briefings. We also thank all members of the Security Council for their statements, all of which reflect great concern with regard to the tragic conditions in my country, Yemen.

Today, after two years of the coup in Yemen, the scene is depressing and dark. The Houthi militias, allied with the former President, have tampered with the fate of the Yemeni nation, looted our scare resources and paved the way for hunger, diseases and epidemics that devastate the people. They are telling all Yemenis either to accept the coup, the prevalence of sectarian politics and the Iranian plot in Sana'a, which creates permanent tension in the area, or to face death and destruction. The Under-Secretary-General and the representative of the WFP have presented a glimpse into the dire humanitarian situation my country has reached.

In areas under the control by those masterminding the coup, who are not Yemenis, access of humanitarian aid to the besieged city of Taiz has been impeded and

access to the United Nations mission in the city has also been denied. This Organization failed to condemn that fact during the cessation of hostilities. Since the end of the talks in Kuwait, the coup party has refused to interact positively in the framework of the proposed peace process based on the three terms of reference. They have continued waging war and exploited the cessation of hostilities to smuggle mid-range missiles with a range of more than 600 kilometres, such as those that targeted the holy sites in Saudi Arabia that are sacred to all Muslims throughout the world.

Iranian-made Noor and Kosar missiles — naval missiles that have been modified to launch from land to attack sea vessels — have targeted international waterways in the southern part of the Red Sea. Reports of the Panel of Experts on Yemen and the American Fleet in the region have confirmed the scope of the shipments from Iran to the coup masters in Yemen. The Security Council has failed to issue a single statement condemning that terrorism-sponsoring State, despite several communications transmitted by Member States to the Secretary-General and the Security Council.

The choice of peace was, and remains, the choice of the Yemeni Government. It is our unwavering position, and the only alternative to end the suffering of our patient and strong Yemeni people, who have been continued to pay the price of an unjust war waged everywhere in Yemen by the militias of the Houthi and Ali Abdullah Saleh. We in the Government believe that peace is the only way to eradicate the criminal gangsters and warlords and to liberate the people from those murderers who, devoid of conscience, have destroyed our resources and valuable infrastructure and threaten our daily life.

For the past two years, the Yemeni Government has demonstrated its positive and responsible position and participated interactively in initiatives of the international community. We have continuously proposed painful concessions for the sake of peace in Yemen, while the coup masters continue to refuse a peaceful settlement and persist in carrying out militia activity. As a result some may have thought that we might propose measures to undermine sovereignty and the restoration of the State, resorting to security arrangements without guarantees or an understanding of the social, geographical and political background of the conflict in Yemen.

While we emphasize the importance of the three terms of reference for peace in Yemen, the coup side has insisted on evading those solutions and continuing unilateral actions that have been rejected by the international community, such as establishment of a political entity to administer the State and appointing a coup-based Government. When the consultations in Kuwait ended, owing to the refusal of the other side to interact with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, international efforts continued, leading to ministerial meetings of the four in Jeddah, New York and London. We in the Government welcomed the new efforts supplementing the United Nations efforts. We emphasize that any attempt to evade the three terms of reference for peace, as represented by the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementing mechanism, and the National Dialogue Conference outcomes and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015), all serve to stoke actions by the coup, and thus the violence in Yemen. Any proposal that is not aimed at ending the coup and its withdrawal from all of the cities and the State institutions and the handing over of weapons and missiles and release of the prisoners, all of that would be taking the side of the militias and accepting the logic of terrorism and its control over the fate of nations.

Sustained peace cannot be achieved by rewarding the coup masters for their coup and handing them authority on a golden plate. It cannot be achieved by keeping most of the weapons in the hands of the militias, while they continue to occupy villages and governorates and cities under the pretense of a gradual solution, while demanding an end to legitimacy. Peace will not be achieved by ignoring the recognized terms of reference and ignoring the sacrifices of the Yemeni people or their victories. Peace will not be achieved without removing all those that have impeded the peaceful transfer of power in Yemen, sabotaged the transitional period, rejected the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference outcomes and waged war and destruction and threatened international peace and security and navigational activities in international waterways. Peace will not be achieved without removing every person so involved, including former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, his son Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh and Abdulmalik al-Houthi and their brothers and assistants.

All parties in Yemen, including political parties, military leaders, security leaders and elected leaders of

local governate councils and youth groups and women's organizations, have issued statements in the past few days condemning any deviation from the path of peace and any attempt to thwart efforts to stop the conflict in Yemen. They have expressed support for His Excellency the President to prioritize the negotiations so that we can bury the coup and ensure victory to democracy and the Republic of Yemen.

Today Yemen's sovereignty is represented by the presidency. It cannot be compromised, as it is the sole guarantor of the completion of the political transition in Yemen. To complete the new federal constitution, we have warned many times, as Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed well knows, that further pressure against the legitimate Government will lead to strengthening of the coup's forces and will not allow the international community to contribute to rebuilding the Yemeni State. On the contrary, that will fuel the coup forces and the idea that the international community is closer to understanding the Iranian expansion plan in Yemen.

We have affirmed several times in this Chamber that the war in my country, Yemen, can end today. As I stated, that is based on the power of the Yemeni people and their rejection of the death banner raised by the militias, through raising their voices as one in rejecting and demanding an end to the coup and this unjust war against our great Yemeni people.

I therefore call upon the Yemeni people to reject the devilish criminal militias that have transformed life in our nation into a real nightmare, so that we can implement together, once again, the outcomes of the National Dialogue that we formulated with our dreams and aspirations in order to catch up with the rest of humankind and build a federal, democratic, peaceful Yemen.

In conclusion, Yemen highly appreciates the efforts of His Excellency the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, as well as those on the part of the Security Council and the Ambassadors of the Group of 18 for peace and stability in Yemen. We also renew our thanks and gratitude to our brethren in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt and the remaining States Organizationf the Arab Coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen. We call upon all members of the Security Council to continue making the unified efforts that have accompanied the crisis in Yemen since it began in 2011. Because of the Council's unified position, a great deal has been achieved in Yemen in partnership with the Yemeni Government. This can be added to the impeccable record of the United Nations in conflict resolution in the world.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I would ask speakers to be very, very brief, as we have one more meeting scheduled.

I give the floor to Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien: Extremely briefly, I just wanted to reiterate that the best humanitarian response is to find a way forward to peace, and I would certainly urge all to get behind the plan put forward by the Special Envoy.

I just want to give total assurance to the representative of the United States that if we have access, then we can certainly make sure that we go through an extraordinary level of surge in order to meet the needs, providing we are given the resources to do so; I am confident that we will be given the chance. I call on all parties to respect all provisions for the protection of civilians, and at the same time I wish to add my voice to those that have lauded the incredible bravery of the aid workers who are getting significant amounts of aid through, even in these very challenging times of an absolutely vast humanitarian requirement of 21.2 million people in need.

As was reiterated by the President himself, this is a catastrophe, and that is why I am calling for us to take immediate steps to do what we can to get to grips with it.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. O'Brien for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Hadi.

Mr. Hadi: First, I should like to thank the United States for having invited me today. I think that this very much helped me to fulfil the promise that I made to the people that I would convey their suffering to the Council.

Secondly, I wish to thank the Member States for listening to me. As a matter of fact, this is the first time that I feel that I am working as an ambassador, but this time an ambassador for the women and the children, an ambassador for the voiceless and an ambassador for the people in Yemen, who do not have the opportunity to come here and express what they are going through. When I was speaking, the images of the people that I met came into my mind, and I am glad that I am able to convey part of what I saw to the Council.

Last but not least, I wish to leave the Council with one thought: saving lives in Yemen is doable. It is not mission impossible. It can be done, and we have done it in many places in the world. What we want is the support of the Council. We want the support of all Member States. We want the support of the international community. There is no reason to lose even one life in Yemen, so I would repeat once again that saving lives is not mission impossible. We will do it.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Hadi for his statement.

I believe that today's meeting was very useful and enabled us to once again better understand how tragic and complicated the situation in Yemen is and the complicated nature of the work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. I would therefore like to conclude this meeting by expressing strong support for his efforts, which we all hope will lead to peace in Yemen as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.